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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Captain Margaret Kibben, United States Navy.

PRAYER

The guest chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious Creator, whose presence permeates like sunlight, whose mercy is revealed through Your ceaseless compassion, and whose authority has called the world into being, we call on You to bring forth this day in accordance with Your grace plan.

As the men and women who serve in the Senate gather together in this Chamber to exercise the processes of power and politics, remind them that it is Your transcendence that presides over today's deliberations, Your merciful will that guides the political debate, and Your ultimate authority that is the source and foundation of their objectives.

So reminded, ordain these elected officials this day to wield this Nation's legislative power guided by Your presence; to engage in partisan discourse in response to Your mercy; and to align their objectives in accordance with Your authority, so that all that is said and done here may reflect Your presence, Your mercy, and Your power.

We stand in Your grace and pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JON TESTER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 23, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. TESTER thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

MARKING THE 24TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE U.S. MARINE BARRACKS BOMBING IN BEIRUT, LEBANON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, normally the majority leader would proceed first. Since he is not on the floor at the moment, I wish to make a few remarks on leader time here as we get started.

I rise today in honor of the 241 U.S. marines, sailors, and soldiers who were killed in a despicable suicide bombing attack on the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. That attack occurred 24 years ago today on October 23, 1983.

President Ronald Reagan had dispatched U.S. forces in 1982 to maintain the peace in Lebanon. On the morning of October 23, one Lebanese terrorist drove a truck packed with explosives through three guard posts and a barbed-wire fence, straight into the

lobby of the U.S. Marine Corps' headquarters. The bomb exploded with the force of 18,000 pounds of dynamite. It transformed the four-story cinder block building into rubble.

It was so powerful, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia later described it as "the largest non-nuclear explosion that had ever been detonated on the face of the Earth."

Some of the men and women lost that day were murdered in their sleep. Others who saw the truck come crashing in may have seen the face of the enemy as their last sight on Earth. Either way, 241 Americans wearing their country's uniform were killed in a brutal attack that shocked America and the world.

Five Kentuckians were among the 241 who died in that attack. They were: PFC Sidney James Decker, U.S. Marine Corps, of Clarkson, KY; LCpl Virgil D. Hamilton, U.S. Marine Corps, of McDowell, KY; Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Robert S. Holland, U.S. Navy, of Gilbertsville, KY; SGT Thomas C. Keown, U.S. Marine Corps, of Louisville, KY; and SGT Daniel S. Kluck, U.S. Army, of Owensboro, KY.

Terrorists and their favorite tactic—the suicide attack—are still with us today. Thankfully for America, so are the U.S. Marines.

Founded in 1775, the U.S. Marine Corps has been "at the tip of the spear" in every one of this Nation's wars, and they will never be stopped by a terrorist's suicide attack. This November, the country will celebrate the Corps' 232nd birthday, and thank them for defending our freedoms.

By taking the fight to the terrorists wherever they hide, the Marines have put terrorists on the defensive, making it less likely they will hit us again here at home. By their courage on the battlefield and constant risk of danger, today's Marines honor every one of their forebears who died defending our country.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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